

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method of manufacturing an ND filter having at least two kinds of films on a substrate, comprising the steps of:

forming a film of at least one layer having a gradation thickness distribution while rotating a mask integrally with the substrate;

forming a film of an outermost layer without using the mask on the film of at least one layer having a gradation thickness distribution; and

subjecting the substrate after film formation to heat treatment in an atmosphere pressure and at a temperature of 100°C to 130°C.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Original): A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forming the film of the outermost layer is a step of forming a film with a constant film thickness.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 3, wherein the step of forming the film of the outermost layer is a step of forming a film with an optical film thickness $n \times d$ (n : refractive index of film, d : mechanical film thickness) of $\lambda/4$ (λ : wavelength of incident light).

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forming the film of at least one layer having a gradation thickness distribution comprises the sub-steps of:

forming a film of a first layer having a gradation thickness distribution while rotating a first mask integrally with the substrate; and

forming a film of a second layer to the layer immediately below the outermost layer having a gradation thickness distribution in an opposite direction from the first layer while rotating a second mask shifted from the first mask integrally with the substrate.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the mask has a sawtooth shape.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 1, wherein the mask is a mask having a dotted pattern.

Claim 8 (Original): A method according to claim 7, wherein the diameter of the dots change stepwise or continuously.

Claim 9 (Original): A method according to claim 7, wherein a distance between centers of dots change stepwise or continuously.

Claim 10 (Original): A method according to claim 7, wherein the mask having the dotted pattern is used with a distance between the mask and the substrate set to a value in a range of 1 mm to 50 mm.

Claim 11 (Canceled).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): An aperture device comprising:

an ND filter; and

a plurality of aperture blades ~~which are~~ including an aperture blade to which said ND filter is fixed, said plurality of aperture blades relatively driven to change a size of an aperture; and

~~an ND filter fixed to at least one of the aperture blades,~~ wherein said ND filter comprises:

a substrate,

a film of at least one layer which is formed on the substrate and has a gradation thickness distribution, and

a film of an outermost layer which is formed on the film having the gradation thickness distribution.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A camera comprising:

an optical system; and

an aperture device according to claim 12 which restricts an amount of light passing through the optical system.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): An aperture device according to claim 12, wherein the film thickness of the outermost layer is constant.